

TO THE
RIGHT HON. THE LORD PROVOST, MAGISTRATES, AND
TOWN COUNCIL OF EDINBURGH.

MY LORD PROVOST AND GENTLEMEN,

AFTER I had offered myself as a Candidate for the Logic Chair, I received a letter from Dr Neill, a Member of Council, stating that difficulties seemed to occur to some religious persons in regard to the bearing of Phrenology on certain doctrines of our holy religion. On the 12th day of April last, I wrote to him a letter explaining my views on the subject, which has been since printed and presented to the Council, under the title of "The Suppressed Documents." Dr Neill sent that communication to the Rev. Professor Duncan for his opinion, and he wrote a long and interesting letter on the general subject of the Relation between Phrenology and Christianity. To this letter I replied, and Professor Duncan sent a second short communication to Dr Neill. By the kindness of these gentlemen I have been permitted to print and present the whole correspondence to the Council; and, as it embraces topics of great interest, I hope to be forgiven for the additional trespass which I necessarily make on their time, in requesting for them an attentive perusal.

I have the honour to remain,

MY LORD PROVOST AND GENTLEMEN,

Your very faithful and obedient servant,

GEO. COMBE.

EDINBURGH, 13th June 1836.

LETTER from Rev. Professor DUNCAN to Dr NEILL.

(ON THE RELATION BETWEEN PHRENOLOGY AND
CHRISTIANITY.)

MY DEAR SIR,

NORTH BRIDGE, MID-CALDER,
April 28. 1836.

I am obliged by your communication ; but such is the difficulty of the subject, and the responsibility connected even with an opinion, in present circumstances, that, had it not been for our long-continued friendship, and some slight hope of being useful, as you say, I should have begged leave to decline any reply. The reply, for want of leisure, must be short ; but it will not therefore consist of a few hasty reflections, but exhibit the result of my past studies in Divinity, as related to the comparatively new science of Phrenology. With the latter science, I confess, my acquaintance is not so extensive as it is, or at least should be, with the former ; but as, in regard to Geology, I have my own way of reconciling all the progress yet made in discovery with the statements of Scripture, so in regard to Phrenology ; and I can perceive no discrepancy between the fundamental positions or principles of this new science, so far as founded on, or justified by, the phenomena of the human constitution, and what I have been accustomed to believe on Divine testimony. Phrenologists would manifestly err, were they to promulgate their system of mental philosophy as the all-controlling science, without duly pondering the claims of other sciences, and, according to the validity of these, endeavouring to discover and shew the consistency of Phrenology with these sciences, whether natural or revealed. They would place it under still greater

disadvantage, by representing it as at variance with them, or directly opposed to their ascertained principles. Phrenology may be calculated to assist in the regeneration of the world by a juster view of man's constitution and relation to external nature, but it will never be by superseding Revelation, or displacing any of its fundamental and prominent doctrines. Books professing to be divine exist, have long been preserved, and are known to have been greatly useful in ameliorating the condition of mankind, both by promoting human science and co-operating with it for this purpose: these facts surely demand a most careful examination of their claims.* Predilection for any human science, or for all that comes under this description, should not be allowed so to occupy the mind, as to preclude the enquiry, whether any thing of a higher order exists, which is clearly possible, and whether the Scriptures are the record which contains it. The affirmative being admitted on due examination, it must become a fixed principle, that nothing proved to be certain in physiology or mental philosophy can be really opposed to the plain statements and prominent doctrines of Scripture. We may not be able for a time to perceive the consistency, but we ought not rashly to suppose it is wanting, or to traduce or speak unfavourably of either science, on account of the other. I should indeed have regretted much if Mr Combe had adopted a different course, as this mode of procedure must have tended to separate, and render antagonist, two great engines intended by God for the benefit of mankind, and must therefore have obstructed the rapid elevation of human nature to its true dignity. But it is pleasing to know that the disparagement of any other science, human or divine, is disclaimed by him and all sound phrenologists.

I am not exactly aware of what Mr C. means by styling our propensities and sentiments mere "blind instincts," nor

* Phrenologists assume the existence and authority of revelation.—G. C.

can I see the propriety or philosophical accuracy of the phrase, as explained by himself, of the susceptibility of a right and wrong direction ; nor do I understand how he distinguishes between these and a “ superior illumination,” which he seems to refer chiefly, if not solely, to reason,—admitting, as I think he does, the utility of Revelation as a guide to reason. Would it not be wise to reconsider, if not the statement, yet the terms in which it is expressed ? I do not see how he will be otherwise able to escape misrepresentation. He knows the difficulties connected with the doctrine of instincts, which render it almost impossible to define them, or draw the line of demarcation between them and other phenomena of the mental constitution. He knows the misconstruction to which the term Instinct, in its ordinary acceptance, is liable, when applied to a large proportion of the human constitution.* While a convert to the science of which he is the able and strenuous advocate, so far as I have had opportunity of studying it, my uncertainty with regard to some of his statements connected with theology, renders it necessary that I should simply give you my own views ; and, by the knowledge you have of the accordance of these with Mr Combe’s, you will judge how far he is sound *in my opinion*, and fitted for being an instructor of youth in Logic or mental philosophy.

Man, when first formed, was, according to Scripture, innocent, but fallible, and placed in a state of probation. To this his purely physical constitution was evidently adapted. His faculties, with all their organs, being, physically considered, *indifferent*, had only to be framed with that cast which befitted the immediate workmanship of God, that is, Veneration, Destructiveness, Acquisitiveness, Amativeness,

* This would lead me into a long reply in elucidation of my meaning. In my “ System,” Pp. 228, 476, *et passim*, he will find explanations on this topic, which I feel confident must satisfy him and every candid enquirer.—G. C.

&c., all properly directed. Their susceptibility of a wrong direction, which was not precluded by Divine confirmation in the right cast, constituted his fallibility ; and, as it might be proper that God alone should appear to be naturally and necessarily infallible, the state of probation in which Man was placed, and in which the test was most wisely adapted to his circumstances, was permitted in his case (as it had been even in that of Angels) to discover his defectibility. The Scriptures declare, that he deviated from rectitude, and is now in a fallen state. In this state the organization is less perfect, the cast of all the propensities is to evil, they are constantly apt to take the wrong direction, while reason is impaired, and unable to control them. Science may do much to restore reason to its proper place, and even to render it susceptible of the power of revelation, and thus of that supernatural influence which accompanies divine truth ; but it is to revelation, accompanied with this influence, we must now look for the true regeneration of man. What is there here inconsistent with the discoveries of Phrenology, or calculated to displace its utility ?

If it be asked how all men, in consequence of the first transgression, came to be in a fallen state, I must refer, for the discussion of this point, to the Essay on the Existence of a God, part ii. sect. 2, on *the Origin and Existence of Moral Evil*, published in the first volume of the Biblical Family Library, where the account of this matter is given to the best of my power, and from which it will appear that our present fallen state is *punitive*, as well as on what principle it is so. Unless this view of the present existence of moral and physical evil, for which we are indebted to Revelation, be adopted, I see no way of vindicating the Deity from being the direct author of both. Were Mr C. to hold that the present constitution of man is that which was original, I do not conceive how he could extricate himself from the startling imputation. But I am yet to learn

that he does so, or how it is essential to Phrenology to hold such an opinion.* On the principles which have just been suggested, the science is perfectly consistent with the Scripture account, both of the state of probation and of our present condition; and these principles afford as much satisfaction as perhaps we shall ever get, or as is necessary in the present life, with regard to the propriety of the ways of God, and his benignity to man. When I find that he had ulterior designs as to this world and its inhabitants, which could not be developed in the first formation of man, I do not enquire whether, proleptically, the physical state of inferior beings, animate and inanimate, might not be adapted to what He who seeth the end from the beginning knew would take place, and intended to permit, for the purposes of his own glory. As flowers were made to decay and fruits to perish, so might carnivorous animals be intended to feed on others, just as the graminivorous on the herbs of the field; and all this, together with the natural death of the animals, even abstract from the anticipated result of the state of human probation, might be sufficiently consistent with the utility, pleasures, and happiness of inferior creatures, who, having no responsibility, could be intended only for temporary existence. I see no necessity for supposing any change in their condition beyond that which arises from their now being employed for purposes of judgment, or that to which they are subjected by the cruelty and violence of fallen man. This the Scriptures style their being “subjected to vanity and the bondage of corruption,” contrary to their original design. That the state of nature

* See p. 36 of the 12mo. edition of *Constitution of Man*. “The view now presented, makes no attempt to explain *why* pain or evil exists, because I conceive the inquiry to surpass the limits of the human understanding.” The assumption that, by Phrenology, or any other science, it can be proved that the present state of man (which alone I investigate) was his *original* state, is disclaimed by Phrenologists.—G. C.

was the same prior to the fall that it still is, seems to be indicated, by the employment assigned to man, of dressing and keeping in order the garden of Eden,—a pleasant recreation, calculated to furnish that exercise by which, as truly as by food, his life and health were to be upheld, but which implies the same necessity of restraining luxuriance, of sowing, transplanting, clearing, propagating the finer specimens, and otherwise improving both flowers and fruits, or preventing them from degenerating, which now exists, though, doubtless, not to that inconvenient and oppressive extent which is traced to the fall.—Gen. ii. 15 ; iii. 17, 18, 19. Does not this, on the principle of analogy, lead to a similar conclusion with regard to the Animal Kingdom ?

But would not man have been liable to be harmed or devoured by the *feræ*, though he had retained his primitive integrity ? There is no necessity for supposing the occurrence of such danger from defect of food, from natural inclination, or from any casual supervening malignity of disposition, on the part of the inferior animals. Man, whatever may be the analogy between him and them in organization, is such a different creature, that Reason itself must recognise him as their manifestly intended lord ; and the Scriptures preclude all idea of danger by declaring, that, in the majesty of innocence, he was invested with “ dominion over the beasts of the earth, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea.” The difference between him and them, the existence of this dominion, and the safety resulting from it, were all indicated by the peaceful transition of the animals before Adam, when, pondering their characters, he gave them names, but selected no companion from among them, rejecting even those that most nearly resembled himself.* Even on the supposition, clearly inadmissible, that circumstances incompatible with a state of innocence had

* *Simia, quam similis, turpissima bestia nobis.* Cic. ex Ennio.

occurred, the danger *could* have been prevented, as infidels must allow, as easily as the destruction of Daniel in the lions' den, or of his companions in the fiery furnace. He who, from respect to moral integrity and religion, in the case of imperfect beings, could restrain the devouring animals or element, might surely have been expected to command absolute security for the unfallen; but, according to Scripture, the arrangements were so made, as to supersede the necessity of recourse to miraculous interposition.

But was not man naturally mortal—liable to die? There was certainly nothing in his physical constitution to prevent his liability to die. Rigidity and decay, the natural effects of old age, might have occasioned his dissolution. Thus far I agree with Mr C. But who is not aware that Revelation not only forbids the supposition of this natural process occasioning his death, or of his dying in any other way, had he not sinned, but even suggests an explanation of the subject? “There is first a natural body (dependent on air, food, &c.), and there is a spiritual body” (which can live independent of these supports), — such a body as Christ now has, or Enoch and Elijah. The possibility of this Paul illustrates from analogy, 1 Cor. xv. 39–42. Now, the former, the natural body, we derive from Adam, who was made a living soul; the latter would have been conferred, had he not fallen, without tasting of death,—as it shall be upon all the redeemed through the mediation of Christ, who are alive and remaining at the last day. It would have been but a poor felicity, of which man (even a botanist) might have become weary, to have remained for ever in this world, though surrounded with a paradisaic state of things. God intended something of a higher order for man; and, after preserving him free from danger, in all the delicious feelings of the soundest health, would have invested him with the spiritual body, that is, effected a change on the same body, calculated to fit him

for existence in another region, to which successive generations would have passed to give place to the new generations produced in this world. Though, for wise reasons, (specified in the section of the work already referred to*), moral and physical evil is allowed to exist even with the regenerated, yet are they represented in Scripture as ultimately restored by the second Adam to all that was lost and forfeited by the first. These seem to me legitimate conclusions from such scriptures as the following:—Gen. ii. 17. iii. 19; Rom. v. 12. 17. viii. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 22. 44–50. And what is there in all this inconsistent with the true principles of Phrenology, or how can it infer the necessity of a primitive and original destination to death?

I am anxious we should have a fellowship of mind on the subject of this letter, though we should differ a little on others. I hope Mr Combe will never perceive any thing incompatible with just views of the doctrines of Scripture in the science which he has done so much to elevate to its present state. The phenomena of which it treats are in my view of great importance in mental training, and no more inconsistent with human responsibility, or favourable to materialism, than other phenomena of our physical constitution, long known, and universally admitted.

I am, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

ALEX. DUNCAN.

LETTER from Mr COMBE to Dr NEILL.

MY DEAR SIR,

EDINBURGH, *May* 15. 1836.

I duly received your letter of the 29th of April, inclosing a letter dated the 28th of April, from the Rev. Professor Duncan to you. I have read both with great attention, and have delayed answering them till now, in consequence of your

* Biblical Family Library, vol. i. p. 168–192.

having intimated that you were then on the eve of setting out for London. Allow me to offer my best acknowledgments to you for the kind and upright motives which induced you to apply to Professor Duncan for his opinion of the relation between my phrenological doctrines and Christianity, and to him for the excellent spirit in which he has answered your appeal. My own views are the following :

There are three questions which it is here necessary to distinguish and to treat separately, viz.

1. What facts and doctrines in Phrenology are conformable to nature?

2. What are conformable to right interpretations of Scripture?

3. What are conformable to the standards of any particular church, the Church of Scotland, for example, or that of England, or that of Rome?

I assume it as a fundamental principle, that there cannot by possibility be any discrepancy between real facts in nature, or sound deductions from them, and right interpretations of Scripture; because the God of Nature and Revelation is one: He is the fountain of truth and wisdom, and his works and word cannot be discordant.

In directing my attention, therefore, to Nature, I never once imagined that if I discriminated truth I could be deviating from Scripture; nor can I conceive this even now to be the case.

I regard Revelation as a sacred subject which ought not lightly to be brought into collision with philosophy. This may be done in two ways—by adducing ill-observed or incorrectly interpreted natural phenomena as evidence against revelation on the one hand,—or by advancing erroneous interpretations of Scripture as objections against indubitable natural truths on the other. Many sceptical writers have been guilty of the first,—while the Roman Pontiff and Cardinals who condemned Galileo, and also the reli-

gious authors who in our day denounce geology as inconsistent with Scripture,—are chargeable with the second of these errors.

It appears to me more advantageous to investigate nature *by herself first*, and to proceed to compare her phenomena with Scripture only after being certain that we have rightly observed and interpreted them.

By this method we shall preserve our minds calm and unbiassed for the investigation of truth ; we shall test Nature by herself, which is the proper standard by which to try her ; and we shall avoid bringing discredit on Revelation by involving it in unseemly conflicts with natural phenomena.

To be able to discover, in a sound and satisfactory manner, the relationship between natural truths and revelation, the investigator should be critically acquainted with both. In reading the attacks made by serious persons who are ignorant of geology, against the discoveries made in that science, you must have occasionally been convinced, that, in so far as they had the power, they were injuring, while they intended to serve, the cause of religion ; because they were denouncing as subversive of Revelation, facts which could not possibly give way before any form of argument, seeing that they were founded in nature. The same error is committed every day in regard to Phrenology. Religious persons attack certain statements as *false* which are indubitably *true*, and only bring obloquy on their own cause when they imagine that they are overwhelming the advocates of the new science.

It is rare, however, particularly in the case of a new science, to find an individual qualified by his knowledge of science and Scripture to compare them advantageously. The mind of the successful explorer of nature is generally too closely and ardently directed towards her phenomena, to render him equally clear-sighted and zealous in his interpretations of Scripture. Both objects, therefore, will

be better accomplished, if he who takes the lead in interrogating nature shall confine himself to that province ; and if another individual possessed of a clear, calm, and unbiassed understanding, who has made theology his study, shall follow in his tract,—detecting his errors where he has fallen into any, yet recognising and embracing all the truth which he has brought to light,—and shall then proceed to compare this truth with Revelation, with the single and upright purpose of discovering their harmony.

Entertaining these views, I have on principle confined myself to the investigation of nature, never doubting that, in so far as I may have discovered truth, Scripture will be found to harmonize with my doctrines. If in any instance I have observed or interpreted erroneously, I shall be most anxious, on this being pointed out, to renounce my errors. But I hope it will not be imputed to me as a fault that I have not discussed also the relation of nature to Revelation, regarding this, as I certainly do, as more properly the duty of individuals better qualified than myself for the task.

There is another distinction which is too often overlooked. All Christian churches are agreed in regard to the import and obligation of the moral precepts of Christianity, and it is only touching points of doctrine and church government that they differ. Now, Phrenology as a mere human science comes into direct relationship only with the first—the practical precepts—and it has generally been allowed by those who have attended to the subject, that no mental philosophy in existence can be compared with it, not only for its exact accordance with this great and important department of Christianity, but for the power with which it demonstrates that all nature is framed and adjusted on the principle of enforcing by positive sanctions the scheme of Christian morals.

I very respectfully maintain, therefore, that Phrenology, and the deductions which I have made from it, are in a re-

markable degree in harmony with all the points on which the Christian world in general is agreed ; and when you consider that the Logic Chair is one, not of theology but of science, and that, by the constitution of your University, the class may be, and generally is, attended by students professing a variety of shades of doctrinal belief,—it may well be doubted whether this certain harmony between the principles of Phrenology, and those Christian principles in which all the students are agreed, be not a decided recommendation of it to the Patrons.

The third question before stated, or the accordance of Phrenology with the standards of the Church of Scotland, is the only one that remains to be considered. If there be harmony between the constitution of Nature and the doctrines of Phrenology, and also between the moral precepts of Christianity and these doctrines, which there assuredly is, it would be strange indeed if discord were discovered between them and sound Christian doctrine. Assuming, then, that the standards are correct deductions from Scripture, it is a fair presumption that they and Phrenology do also agree. But as philosophy is addressed to men of every variety of faith, and as I appear before you exclusively as a philosopher, I humbly urge that it is the duty of the divines of each church to adjust the relation between their own standards and any particular philosophical doctrines, if true, (and if mine be untrue I shall cheerfully abandon them); and that the members of the Church of Scotland are not entitled to insist on your rejecting my claims to a philosophical professorship, merely because they have not taken the trouble to discharge a duty incumbent exclusively on themselves.

I am confirmed in my conviction of the soundness of the course which I have adopted in avoiding all doctrinal discussion in my printed works, by a fact which cannot be generally known. I have received letters from several excellent and ingenious friends well skilled in theology, on

the relation between doctrinal Christianity and Phrenology, reconciling them ; but no two of them agree in the manner of doing so. Each proceeds according to his individual views of Christianity, and according to his individual cast of mind. Professor Duncan's views, although highly ingenious, differ from them all. This satisfies me that the time is not yet come, and that the men have not yet appeared, for doing justice to this great subject ;—and perhaps they will not arrive until both Revelation and Phrenology shall have been contemplated under broader and stronger lights than are yet possessed ; and which, I cannot doubt, will at last bring them into complete harmony. Any attempt on my part, therefore, to enter on this question at present, would prove unsatisfactory to myself and unprofitable to the public. Probably a report from a committee of the first members of the Church, after Phrenology shall have been fully studied by them as science, will be necessary before the public mind will be thoroughly satisfied on the subject, and I should allow such a committee several years for deliberation. But this affords no reason why the progress of truth should be arrested in the mean time ; why a doctrine founded in nature, and admitted by many sound theologians to be undeniably in harmony with practical Christianity, should be excluded from your University, and why I should be held forth as an enemy to religion merely because certain of those who take an interest in that sacred cause have not yet found it convenient to study the two subjects and deliberately to compare them. If I advance only doctrines founded in nature and in accordance with Christian morality, I am entitled to the benefit of the presumption that they are also in harmony with all sound doctrinal interpretations of Scripture. If any of my views are at variance with nature or Christian morality, I am ready to give them up.

You are aware that my works on Phrenology have

obtained a very extensive circulation, in this country, in America and on the Continent, and that my lectures have been numerous and respectably attended. Is it credible that I can have been teaching doctrines hostile to Christianity, and yet have been thus cordially received? I very respectfully maintain, and you as a Phrenologist are capable of judging of the point, that my whole doctrines are much more obviously in accordance with Christianity than the philosophical theories of Mr Stewart and Dr Brown, which are not generally objected to by the Christian public. In my System of Phrenology, in particular, which contains all the principles of the science that would be embraced by the Logic Chair, there is not a view that any reasonable Christian can object to. And I am ready to pledge myself, if this should be any satisfaction to the Patrons, not to go beyond the contents of that volume in teaching Logic on phrenological principles in the University. They have a guarantee for my sincerity in this assurance, in my offer to resign the Chair on their requisition to do so. To you who understand Phrenology, I need scarcely add, that the very clearness of the light which it throws on the human faculties, their objects, and applications, would afford no small security against any Professor abusing it in teaching dangerous doctrines; it would enable the students instantly to detect, to expose, and refute the errors of their master.

Allow me, in conclusion, to draw your attention to the fact, that the late Rev. Dr Andrew Thomson attended a course of my lectures on Phrenology in 1822 or 1823, and survived the publication of "The Constitution of Man," a copy of which I presented to him, for nearly three years; and although he conducted the Christian Instructor, and was a zealous, ready, and powerful writer, vividly alive to the purity of the faith which he espoused, yet he never published a word against that book. I sat for several years in his church, and was personally acquainted with him, and

yet I never received even any private remonstrance from him on the subject. Further, Dr Chalmers published his Bridgewater Treatise several years after my work had appeared, and although the subjects in his book and mine are closely analogous, he has stated no objection whatever to my views, which is quite inconceivable if he had regarded them as dangerous and unfounded in nature, and been prepared to refute them. Now, I very respectfully submit, that it would be unjust to presume against me, without evidence and without argument, that my facts and deductions are erroneous and at variance with Scripture, and on this presumption alone to exclude me from the Logic Chair. Instead of enjoying the natural presumption of innocence, which is allowed even to malefactors, until they be proved to be guilty, the rule is proposed to be reversed in my case. Some religious men contend for my exclusion on the bare possibility that I may, after the matter is investigated, be found to have committed heresy ! They urge my exclusion without any responsible accuser having appeared against me, without a trial, and of necessity, therefore, in opposition to justice. I can only appeal to the common sense and good feelings of mankind against such proceedings.

I observe a work by Mr Scott of Teviotbank in opposition to "The Constitution of Man," announced as preparing for publication. But I can hardly anticipate that he will consider himself called on to supply the *supposed* omissions of the two learned Doctors of Divinity above named. If, however, I shall be mistaken in this, and if Mr Scott shall make any attempt to shew that my work contains doctrines inconsistent with the principles of sound Christianity, it will be sufficient for me to remind you and the public that Mr Scott is a layman, that he enjoys no reputation for theological learning, and that his opinions therefore are not of authority to decide the question. Besides, you are

well aware that Mr Scott strenuously opposed the views contained in the Constitution of Man when they were discussed in the Phrenological Society prior to their publication, and that the public voice in this country, in America, and on the Continent, has pronounced an opinion of the work widely different from that entertained by him.

I am, my dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

GEO. COMBE.

SECOND LETTER, Rev. Professor DUNCAN to Dr NEILL.

MY DEAR SIR,

NORTH BRIDGE, MIDCALDER,

May 31. 1836.

I received yours yesterday, with the two letters,—mine certainly in another form than I expected such a hasty production to appear in.* However, if Mr Combe thinks the circulation of both will be of any service to him, I have no objection to your printing it. His, I think, is calculated to remove misapprehension and scruples. Tender to him my thanks for the kind manner in which he received mine, on your shewing it to him.

With his fundamental principle, (page 11,) I entirely agree,—who should not? but without relinquishing the statements, pages 3-4; for deference to ascertained facts is different from making reason judge, not of the proofs of revelation, which it must always be, (for these are facts too, though ascertained by testimony,) but of the contents or doctrines of revelation. An accredited revelation cannot be opposed to ascertained facts in physiology or any other science, but it may aid in explaining or accounting for them, and such aid ought to be sought, and cordially accepted. My sole objection was, to combining with Phrenology opinions on subjects not necessarily connected with

* In proof sheet.

it ; and I cannot but approve of Mr Combe's distinction of the three questions, and the manner in which he follows it out, as also of the plan on which he proposes to teach Logic should the honour of the Chair be conferred upon him. It is certainly the business of divines to reconcile undeniable phenomena with Revelation. This they are bound to do, and this they will ever be able to do, with all the requisite measure of success, provided no impediment be thrown in their way, by attaching inferences or opinions to these phenomena which interfere with sound theology, or constrain to interpretations of Scripture inconsistent with the rules of just biblical criticism, or calculated to displace the necessity and make void the utility of a Divine Revelation. It gives me pleasure to find Mr Combe intends no such method of teaching.

I am, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

ALEX. DUNCAN.

TO MR W. M. FRASER, Printer, Edinburgh.

MY DEAR SIR,

EDINBURGH, 4th June 1836.

As you have had the best opportunities of observing the effects which Phrenology has produced, and is producing, on the minds of the middle and operative classes of Edinburgh, and as you were highly instrumental in founding and promoting, for several years, the Society for procuring instruction in Useful Knowledge, now denominated the Edinburgh Philosophical Association, I shall feel greatly obliged if you will favour me with a statement of your experience and observations, in such a form as may be presented to the Council.—I am, my dear Sir, yours sincerely,

GEO. COMBE.

LETTER from Mr WILLIAM FRASER, Printer, Edinburgh.

TO GEORGE COMBE, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

The Chair of Logic being that in which are or should be taught the true nature of the intellectual faculties, and the proper means of applying them to their legitimate objects, I conceive that *all* classes of the community in the kingdom, and more especially the citizens of Edinburgh, have a very deep interest in the proper selection of a Professor to fill that Chair, now vacant, in our University, and I therefore cheerfully give my humble opinion on the merits of your claims, both on public and individual grounds, to that important situation.

It was in 1828 that my attention was first practically directed to physiological and mental phenomena, by your valuable work on the Constitution of Man. For a considerable time previous **my** health had been seriously impaired, and although the ordinary medical means were resorted to for recovery, I have no hesitation in saying, that it was

the lucid exposition of what you denominate the Natural Laws in the above work, that speedily enabled me to trace the causes of my illness, to avoid these and others in future, and ultimately restored me to health. I have ever since kept the operations of the physical, the organic, and the moral laws steadily in view, and have derived, in common with many of my friends who have done the same, a corresponding portion of bodily and mental comfort.

In the spring of 1832, I accidentally heard you deliver a short course of lectures on Phrenology to a highly respectable audience of medical and other gentlemen ;—in the summer of the same year a more extended (gratis) course to a numerous attendance of the working classes of both sexes ;—and in the winters of 1832-3 and 1834-5 two full courses on the same subject to crowded audiences, composed (likewise of both sexes) of the mercantile and trading portions of the community. At the commencement of the above courses of lectures, the science of Phrenology was in great disrepute among these classes in Edinburgh, but the lucid and masterly exposition which you gave of its principles, and of its practical application to all the duties of life, invariably elicited unqualified praise from all ranks of your hearers, and has completely turned the tide of public opinion in its favour.

In the summer course of lectures given to the working classes, and also in the subsequent one to a higher class of auditors, you gave instruction in the general principles of Physiology, illustrated by anatomical drawings and a human skeleton. You were thus the first to introduce this interesting and essentially practical branch of knowledge into popular education. The propriety of doing so, however, was at first most vehemently denounced, both publicly and privately, as subversive of all right feeling, and a gross breach of morality ; but you soon convinced your auditors to the contrary,—persevered in your philanthropic labours,—and have since seen this description of popular lectures received into due favour with the public.

At the commencement of winter 1833-4, you delivered three lectures on general education, which were afterwards repeated in spring to an audience of the upper ranks, and printed at the request of the Directors of the institution now denominated the Edinburgh Philosophical Association, before whom they were first delivered,—an institution avowedly most deeply indebted to your exertions and liberality, for its origin, and progressive prosperity. In these lectures you ably exposed the many and great defects of the systems of general education as hitherto conducted, and no less clearly delineated the more rational and generally useful plan which should be adopted. These lectures, besides being published as a pamphlet, were also reprinted in Chambers's Journal, and had a very extensive circulation. On this occasion, again, your views were most virulently attacked by a considerable portion of the press, and by a great majority of those engaged in public instruction; but again you most successfully triumphed; and, it may be unnecessary to remark, what is now so generally known, that numerous seminaries of education for all ages and ranks in society have been everywhere already established upon your principles, and are flourishing in an eminent degree, while those on the old plan are languishing and falling off in a corresponding ratio.

In the summer of 1835, you gave a short course of lectures on Moral Philosophy, founded on Phrenology and Physiology, as preliminary to a more extended one, intended to be delivered in winter to the Association above referred to. This course has likewise since been given to a very numerous and highly respectable class of the community, although you laboured under the great disadvantage of a majority of your auditors, many of whom were new attenders, being either totally ignorant of, or but very superficially acquainted with, the principles of either Phrenology or Physiology, upon both of which your course was chiefly based.

I have been thus minute in these details, to shew the great

and successful exertions you have made among all ranks in the cause of public education,—the all but insurmountable obstacles you have had to encounter at every step,—and that, by the manner in which you have successively and most triumphantly borne down every opposition, you have exhibited talents almost unrivalled for defending truth, exposing error, and discharging all the other important duties of a public teacher.

With regard to the system of Mental Philosophy founded on Phrenology, I have no hesitation in saying—if we may judge, from its leading principles being almost intuitively comprehended by the high and the low, the learned and the unlearned, and from its being practically applicable to all the purposes of life, as well those of the most orthodox divine as of the humblest artizan,—that there can be little doubt of its being the true philosophy of mind, or, at all events, vastly superior to any system hitherto adopted. If, therefore, it be the task of a Professor of Logic to expound the constitution of the human faculties and their proper use in the investigation of truth, and to explain their various combinations in the formation or modification of character, with the innumerable advantages to be derived and conferred on the whole community from such knowledge ;—and, farther, if a candidate most thoroughly acquainted with the new science of Mind, and in every other way eminently gifted for the art of public teaching, is to be appointed to fill the vacant chair, its Patrons will have very little difficulty in the selection.

By some I may perhaps be thought to have exceeded the limits of an ordinary testimonial ; but, in the present appointment, the progress of knowledge and the fame of our University are peculiarly at stake,—the eyes of enlightened Europe and of America are bent on the intellectual discrimination and moral courage of its Patrons,—and the rise or fall of the educational reputation of Edinburgh, with all the beneficial or baneful consequences on its mer-

cantile and other concerns, most materially depend on their decision. It becomes, therefore, as already mentioned, the duty of every citizen to state his views fully on the subject ; and, looking to the independent, intelligent, and liberal character of our present Town Council, with the unparalleled weight of unquestionable testimony which you have laid before them in your favour, I am unwilling to doubt the result of their choice.—I am, &c.

W. FRASER.

9th June 1836.